	FORM PTO-1390 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE (REV. 12-2001) ATTORNEY 'S DOCKET NUMBER	
	TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES	_
	DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371 10/049271	!
	CONVENIENT CONSIDERED C.S.C. 371	_
	WO 01/15128 IS.08.2000 PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED 19.08.99	
	DATA DISPLAY FOR MULTIPLE LAYERGO SCREENS	_
	APPLICANTIS) FOR DO/EO/US DIREMON WITEHIRA Pita	
	Applicant herewith submits to the Umted States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information	:
	1. This is a FIRST submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.	
	2. This is a SECOND or SUBSEQUENT submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.	
	3. This is an express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)). The submission must include items (5), (6), (9) and (21) indicated below.	
	4. The US has been elected by the expiration of 19 months from the priority date (Article 31).	
	5. A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)) a. is attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau).	
£ 3	 a. is attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau). b. is attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau). 	
	c. is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US).	
	6. An English language translation of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).	
	a. is attached hereto.	
the second	b. This been previously submitted under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).	
" "The s	7. Amendments to the claims of the International Aplication under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)) a. are attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau).	
m.&	b. have been communicated by the International Bureau.	
T.	c. have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.	
	d. have not been made and will not be made.	
	8. An English language translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371 (c)(3)).	
	9. An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)).	
2.252	10. An English lanugage translation of the annexes of the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)).	
	Items 11 to 20 below concern document(s) or information included:	
	11. An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.	
	12. An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.	
	13. A FIRST preliminary amendment.	
	14. A SECOND or SUBSEQUENT preliminary amendment.	
	15. A substitute specification.	
	16. A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.	
	17. A computer-readable form of the sequence listing in accordance with PCT Rule 13ter.2 and 35 U.S.C. 1.821 - 1.825.	
	18. A second copy of the published international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).	
	19. A second copy of the English language translation of the international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).	
	20. Other items or information:	

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DATA DISPLAY FOR MULTIPLE LAYERED SCREENS

TECHNICAL FIELD

This invention relates to data display.

BACKGROUND ART

Reference throughout this specification shall be made to use of the present invention in relation to the display of data in spreadsheets. However, it should be appreciated that aspects of the present invention can be used in relation to displaying data presented in other formats, perhaps graphically or in some other format for displaying in particular relational data.

There are a number of spreadsheet programs, one of the more prolific being Microsoft ExcelTM. These spreadsheet programs have a number of cells in rows and columns into which data can be input. Often the cells within the spreadsheet are related to each other.

For example, there may be a cell that displays a number which is calculated from the numbers represented in other cells in the spreadsheet. For instance, this particular cell may represent the total of a column of numbers. Any change to the numbers in that column will also be reflected in that cell representing the total.

This system works well when all of the data required to be reviewed can fit onto one computer screen display. However, often the user of the software creates spreadsheets which have more data entered into them than can be shown on one screen display at a time.

To accommodate this need, spreadsheet software often includes a facility akin to an old-fashioned system of having separate sheets of paper or cards except this is

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displayed on the computer, accessed by a virtual tab. For example, the screen may show one set of data. By clicking on a tab, a second set of data is then displayed on the screen with the first set of data being hidden by the second.

Unfortunately, this is still unsatisfactory. This is because the screen does not show all of the data that the user may wish to see. While the user can choose which spreadsheet to view, the user cannot see the effect that changing a cell on one spreadsheet has on another cell on the other spreadsheet.

Another problem is that it can take some time for a user to locate a particular cell. Not only is this another attempt to address the situation has been the ability to include multiple files on a screen which may be cross-linked in terms of having relational data. Thus, it is possible for the user to alter data on one part of the screen in relation to one file and see its effect on another part of the screen in relation to another file.

Unfortunately, these attempts are still unsatisfactory. One problem with this system is that although there may be inter-relational data, there is no physical feel of the relationship between the cells.

For example, on each spreadsheet there may be cells relating to similar data in the same columns and rows for each spreadsheet. However, positioning the spreadsheets beside each other on the screen does not provide an intuitive feel of the relationship of the cells to each other.

Another problem that occurs is that often the single cell has two lots of data assigned to it. One data element is the actual number and the other data element is the formula or relationship equation which generates that number. In traditional spreadsheet programs, the formula is usually only displayed when that particular cell is selected. Therefore, the formula for a number of related cells cannot be displayed at the same time. This is understandably frustrating, particularly when a person is desirous of

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quickly viewing and assessing the relationship between a number of cells to each other.

It is an object of the present invention to address the foregoing problems or at least to provide the public with a useful choice.

Further aspects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the ensuing description which is given by way of example only.

DISCLOSURE OF INVENTION

According to one aspect of the present invention there is provided a method for creating a visual effect in the display of software wherein the

software is for the manipulation of data,

10 the method characterised by the steps of

- a) assigning a particular screen designation code to a first group of data, and
- assigning other screen designation codes to second and other groups of data as desired,

wherein the screen designation code determines which physical screen the group of data is displayed in a multi-level screen display.

As stated previously, the software in preferred embodiments is spreadsheet software, although it should be appreciated that the principles of the present invention can apply to other types of software, particularly those which relate to the display of data, such as databases, graphical analysis and so forth.

The term second and other group of data may cover such items as formula, relational information, highlights, error messages, hints and so forth which can be associated with the first group of data.

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The screen designation code is merely a code that identifies which physical screen the image or software component is displayed upon.

The inventors of the present invention also invented a multi-level screen display and this is described in detail in PCT Application Nos. PCT/NZ98/00098 and PCT/NZ99/00021.

This is a device which is created by combining multiple layers of selectively transparent screens. Each screen is capable of showing an image. In preferred embodiments, the screen layers are liquid crystal displays. Preferably the screens are aligned parallel to each other with a preset distance between them.

With this invention, images displayed on the screen furtherest from the view (background screen), will appear at some depth behind the images displayed on the screen closest to the viewer (foreground screen). The transparent portions on the foreground screen will allow viewers to see images displayed on the background screen.

This arrangement of layering multiple screens allows images to be presented at multiple levels giving the viewer true depth without use of glass or lens.

The present invention will now refer to use with a multi-level screen as described above although this should not be seen as limiting.

The group of data is in preferred embodiments a spreadsheet such as that normally viewed in a spreadsheet program, however this should not be seen as limiting.

It should be appreciated that although reference shall be made throughout this specification now to only background and foreground screens, other aspects of the present invention may utilise more than two screens. For example, various spreadsheets may be on the multiple screens behind the foreground screen.

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A group of data may be that information displayed when a particular tab is selected on the screen. Therefore, that group of data or spreadsheet is displayed on one of the physical screens.

The group of data or spreadsheet that can be viewed by selecting another tab may be displayed on another physical screen. Alternatively, if there are two separate spreadsheet programs, these can be imported to an embodiment of the present invention and have separate spreadsheets from the separate files shown on the separate screens with one spreadsheet overlaying another, but with the ability to see both.

One embodiment of the present invention will be an interface that identifies the coding on existing software with these identifiers and assign various data groups to the appropriate foreground or background screen.

The 'always on top' functions can be made fully or partially transparent by the present invention.

In one embodiment of the present invention, one screen may have a highlight for a particular cell or group of cells positioned either in front of or behind that highlight. In a variation of this embodiment, the highlights of a number of cells may be colour coded with the codes corresponding to a particular relationship to cells of a certain type.

In another embodiment of the present invention, one group of data on one screen may be the actual values within the cells and the other group or groups of data on the other screens may be the coding or formulas or relational information that actually creates the value shown on the other screen.

In some embodiments, the groups of data may all belong to the same large spreadsheet and the second and consequent screens may merely show the wrap-around of that spreadsheet.

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In other embodiments, it may be provided in cells a hyperlink that can take the user of the spreadsheet to other cells or other screens.

Sometimes, the present invention may be useful in error tracking. For example, a mistake in the relational formula between the cells or the data entered may lead to an error. The ability to see a number of cells at once can assist in tracking down where the error occurred or what cells are affected by the error.

In one aspect of the present invention there may be provided the ability to scroll through values on one cell or set of cells on a screen while still being able to view another set of cells on another screen. This is particularly useful where it is desired to be able to search for information or data on various areas of the spreadsheet or database while not disturbing the actual region of the spreadsheet or database that the user is working on.

The scrolling or rotation of data on various cells may be achieved in some instances by the use of a track ball or some other user interface.

In yet another embodiment one of the screens may display tips or hints associated with the cells being displayed on the other screen.

The interface may be a patch for existing software, a library file or a new front end for multiple existing software packages or a completely new operating system.

With existing software that does not have such coding, it may be necessary to implement the present invention by having customised software in which the software developer specifies the software routines which cause the appropriate components and images to go on the appropriate screens.

A further aspect of the present invention is the provision of media on to which instructions in accordance with the present invention has been recorded. For example,

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this media may be a graphics card, CD, hard drive, floppy disk and so forth.

The advantages of the present invention can now be readily seen.

Because of the physical separation between the screens, the viewer can easily see data on the front screen and on the rear screen as required. Thus, the user can see significantly more data than previously viewable with standard software or standard screens. Indeed the amount of data that the user can see is a multiple proportional to the number of screens in the multi-level screen display.

The viewer can instantly see on which screen holds the cell or data that is relevant to it and select this.

The user can also see at a glance the relational nature of the data on the screens. For example, a change on one screen may cause corresponding change on the other screen overlaying it. This gives an instant appreciation of the effect of a change.

In some embodiments of the present invention the cells which change as a consequence of altering data may be colour coded. This allows the user to more quickly identify where that change has occurred on multiple screens.

Some embodiments may have different shading to make it clear as to which screen the group of data is on, or to indicate which data is grouped together. The overall screens may also be shaded/coloured to give visual clarity.

The present invention also allows the user to easily access a desired cell. Not only is this more desirable for the user in terms of mental satisfaction, but this also is significant in terms of physical relief. A problem that frequent computer users have is occupational overuse syndrome (oos) which is the repeated use of muscles, particularly when typing or using a mouse. Easier access means that the mouse is used less in order to find a particular cell and thus a potentially unpleasant medical condition is

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avoided.

In some embodiments of the present invention some cells are presented as 3-dimensional blocks which can be selected, moved or removed like blocks in a wall to reveal data on other screens.

It can be appreciated that the present invention overall literally provides an added dimension to the ability of a user to work with data manipulation programs such as spreadsheets and databases. There is considerably more flexibility and also a reduction in the time and effort required by the user to see the relationship between groups of data to each other.

Aspects of the present invention may extend to other standard functions on a spreadsheet program.

For example, spreadsheet programs often come with the ability to present the data graphically. Thus, for multi-relational data sheets, the present invention can also be used to produce 3-dimensional graphs showing the data on x, y and z axes as required.

15 Brief Description of Drawings

Further aspects of the present invention will become apparent from the following description which is given by way of example only and with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

- Figure 1 illustrates a screen display of a prior art spreadsheet software, and
- 20 Figure 2 illustrates another prior art screen display, and
 - Figure 3 is a concept drawing showing the 3-dimensional nature of the present invention.

BEST MODES FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

Figure 1 is a screen display from a Microsoft ExcelTM program. This illustrates a group of data on a spreadsheet generally indicated by arrow 1 on the screen. The associated tab (2) indicates that the data we are looking at relates to "FBT Calc – Lease".

The screen also shows that there is a second group of data (not shown) and positioned visually under the first group of data. The indicator that there is a second group of data is the tab (3) which reads "FBT Calc – Lease to Own".

To view the second group of data, it is necessary to select the tab (3). However, in doing so the first group of data is obscured by the second group of data. Thus, the effect of a change on one group of data is not immediately discernable as the user cannot see the other group of data.

It can also be seen that it can be difficult for the user to select a particular cell given that half of the data is obscured at any one time.

It should also be appreciated that spreadsheet programs of this type have the ability to have multiple tabs, not just the two shown.

Figure 2 illustrates a screen display whereby two separate files have been imported into the one screen display and are positioned side by side. This enables the user to change data on file and view its corresponding effect on the other file.

However, because the files are side by side, this is not intuitive with there being no real physical relationship between cells having the same common row and column. Further, the screen size is still limited and only a certain amount of data can be fitted onto the screen.

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The present invention provides for the separate groups of data (whether from separate files of merely separate spreadsheets to be displayed on separate physical screens aligned with each other.

Figure 3 shows an example of a multi-level spreadsheet using only 2 layers. Information can be stored on both layers. The layout of the cells can be used to enhance user information by positioning related cells close to or behind one another so as to improve the visual feedback to the user speeding up the development time and improving error detection. The positioning of the cells can also be used to increase the information available on a given cell as illustrated by the text and numbering chosen for figure 3. The front screen is ready to receive the monthly information such as income generated or expenses incurred while the back screen provides the user with immediate information about the day on which the income was generated or expense total incurred, thus reducing the need to look away from the cell to gain this information.

15 A greater number of layers of course can be used.

The 3-dimensional spreadsheet enables the user to see far greater quantities of data in the one visual display than before.

It also enables the user to quickly select a desired cell. Further, the relational nature of the data to each other can be intuitively perceived.

Aspects of the present invention have been described by way of example only and it should be appreciated that modifications and additions may be made thereto without departing from the scope of the appended claims.

CLAIMS:

1. A method for creating a visual effect in the display of software wherein the software is for the manipulation of data,

characterised by the steps of

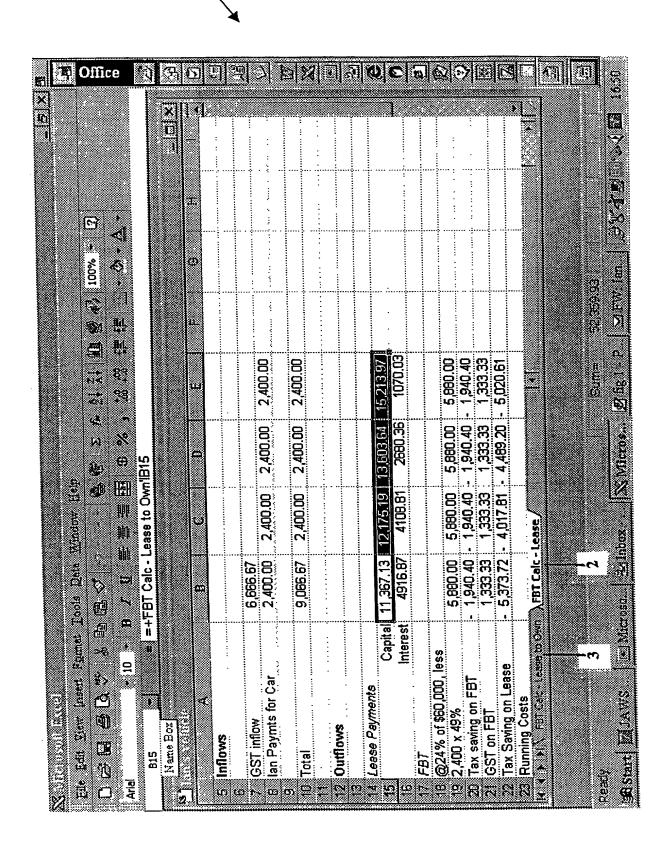
- a) assigning a particular screen designation code to a first group of data, and
- b) assigning other screen designation codes to second and other groups of data as desired.

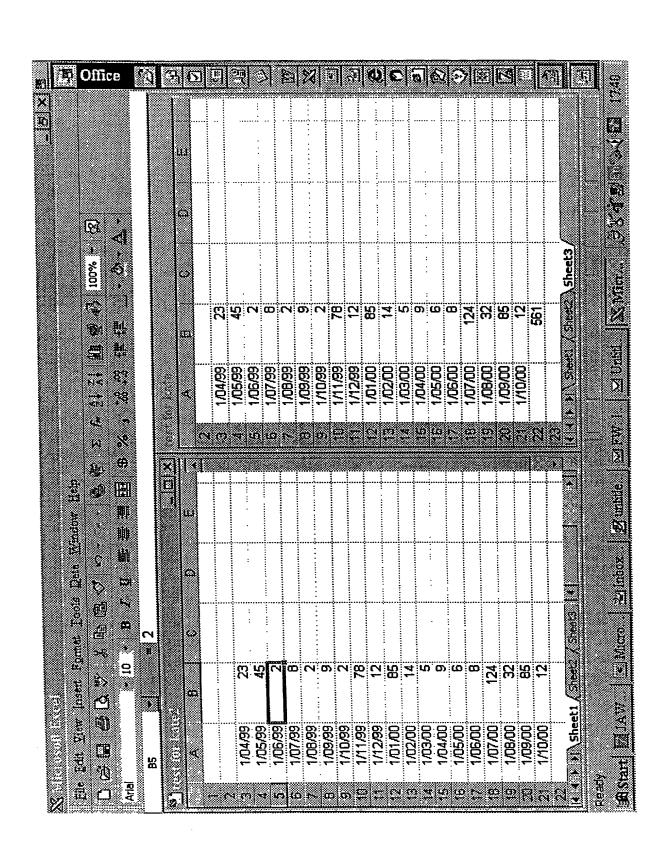
wherein the screen designation code determines which physical screen the group of data is displayed simultaneously in a multi-level screen display.

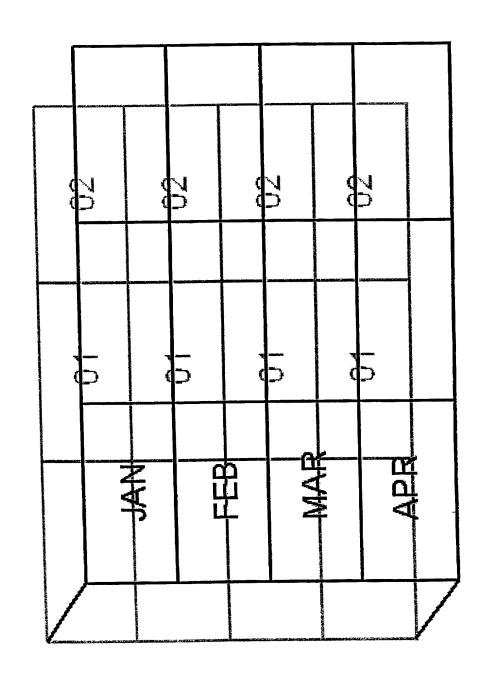
- 2. A method as claimed in claim I wherein the software is spreadsheet software.
- 3. A method as claimed in either claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the groups of data correspond to a particular tab selected on the screen.
- 4. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein one of the groups of data is formula corresponding to values in the cells in another group of data.
- 5. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4 wherein the second or other groups of data is a wrap around or continuation of a page or spreadsheet partially shown in the first group of data.
- 6. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5 wherein the second or other groups of data contains highlights or colour coding corresponding to the first group of data.

- A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6 wherein the second or other groups of data includes hyperlinks from one part of the display to another part.
- 8. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7 wherein the second or other groups of data includes error messages.
- 9. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8 wherein the second or other groups of data have the ability in at least parts of them to enable the user to scroll through information on a particular screen.
- 10. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 9 wherein the second or other groups of data contains tips or useful information pertaining to the first group of data.
- 11. Media which carries instructions for the operation of the method substantially claimed and/or described.
- 12. A method substantially as herein described with reference to and as illustrated by the accompanying drawings.

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Inventor's Signature 3/1/2003	2
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Additional foreign applica	tions:					
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Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. STATEMENT CLAIMING SMALL ENTITY STATUS Docket Number (Optional) (37 CFR 1.9(f) & 1.27(c))-SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN Applicant Patentee, or Identifier. DECP Application or Patent No,: Filedorlssued: Filed I hereby state that I am the owner of the small business concern identified below. an official of the small business concern empowered to act on behalf of the concern identified below: NAME OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN ADDRESS OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN I hereby state that the above identified small business concern qualifies as a small business concern as defined in 13 CFR Part 121 for purposes of paying reduced fees to the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Questions related. to size standards for a small business concern may be directed to: Small Business Administration, Size Standards Staff, 409 Third Street, SW, Washington, DC 20416. I hereby state that rights under contract or law have been conveyed to and remain with the small business concern identified above with regard to the invention described in: the specification filed herewith with title as listed above. the application identified above. the patent identified above. If the rights held by the above identified small business concern are not exclusive, each individual, concern, or organization having rights in the invention must file separate statements as to their status as small entities, and no rights to the invention are held by any person, other than the inventor, who would not qualify as an independent inventor under 37 CFR 1.9(c) if that person made the invention, or by any concern which would not qualify as a small business concern under 37 CFR 1.9(d), or a nonprofit organization under 37 CFR 1.9(e). Each person, concern, or organization having any rights in the invention is listed below: no such person, concern, or organization exists.

Teach such person, concern, or organization is listed below. Dep Video Imagic Separate statements are required from each named person, concern or organization having rights to the invention stating their status as small entities. (37 CFR 1.27) I acknowledge the duty to file, in this application or patent, notification of any change in status resulting in loss of entitlement to small entity status prior to paying, or at the time of paying, the earliest of the issue fee or any maintenance fee due after the date on which status as a small entity is no longer appropriate. (37 CFR 1.28(b)) TITLE OF PERSON IF OTHER THAN OWNER ADDRESS OF PERSON SIGNING

Burden Hour Statement: This form is estimated to take 0.2 hours to complete. Time will vary depending upon the needs of the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you are required to complete this form should be sent to the Chief information Office, Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, DC 20231. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231.